

Khalifatul Masih V<sup>aa</sup>, Friday Sermon – Men of Excellence: Hazrat Umar<sup>ra</sup>. ibn al-Khattab (1 October 2021) The Weekly al-Hakam 21 October 2021. (Original Urdu transcript published in *Al Fazl International* [Sirat-un-Nabi Number], 26 October 2021, pp. 5-10. Translated by *The Review of Religions*.)

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In 2021, during a Friday sermon, Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V<sup>aa</sup> extensively quoted Hazrat Musleh-e-Maud<sup>ra</sup>: describing ‘AMR’s Egyptian campaign:

...

*Now I shall mention the conquests that took place in Egypt. Among those was the Battle of Farama [Pelusium]. Farama was a well-known city of Egypt which was situated to the east of the Mediterranean Sea and Paluzi, which was one of the seven tributaries of the River Nile and the city of Farama was situated on the mountain. (Hazrat Umar Farooq A’zam, Muhammad Husain Haikal, pp. 556-557, Islami Kutub Khana, Lahore)*

*According to Allama Shibli Nomani, after the victory at Baitul Maqdis [Jerusalem], upon the insistence of Hazrat Amr<sup>ra</sup> bin al-Aas, Hazrat Umar<sup>ra</sup> sent Hazrat Amr<sup>ra</sup> bin al-Aas with an army of 4,000 towards Egypt, but with the instruction that they must return if they received his letter prior to reaching Egypt.*

*They reached Arish when the letter from Hazrat Umar<sup>ra</sup> was received in which he instructed them not to advance any further. However, seeing as the instruction was conditional, Hazrat Amr<sup>ra</sup> said that since they were within the confines of Egypt, therefore they would advance from Arish to Farama. (Al-Faruq, Shibli Nomani, p. 160, Dar al-Isha’ah, Karach, 1991)*

*There is a book called Al-Iktifa which covers the Muslim battles. It is written therein that Hazrat Amr<sup>ra</sup> bin al-Aas received the letter of Hazrat Umar<sup>ra</sup> having reached a place called Rafah, but he did not take the letter from the messenger out of fear that it would contain the instruction from Hazrat Umar<sup>ra</sup> to return. So instead, he continued marching forth until he reached a small village between Rafah and Arish, and enquired about the village. He was told that this was within the confines of Egypt. He then asked for the letter to be brought and read it. It was written that he and the Muslims accompanying him should all return.*

*And so he asked his companions, “Do you not see that this is Egypt?” They replied in the affirmative. He then said, “The Leader of the Faithful [Hazrat Umar<sup>ra</sup>] instructed that if I receive the letter prior to reaching Egypt I should return, but I have received it having entered the land of Egypt. So let us go forth in the name of Allah.”*

*It is also mentioned in another narration that Hazrat Amr<sup>ra</sup> bin al-Aas was in Palestine and he advanced with his companions to Egypt without permission.*

*Hazrat Umar<sup>ra</sup> was displeased with this, so he wrote a letter to Hazrat Amr<sup>ra</sup> bin al-Aas and he received this letter when he was close to Arish, but did not read it until he had reached Arish. The letter read as follows:*

*"Umar bin al-Khattab to Amr bin al-Aas:*

*"Thereafter, indeed you are travelling to Egypt with your companions. There is a large army of the Byzantines there whilst you are few in number. I swear that it would have been better had you not taken them with you, therefore if you have not yet reached Egypt, you must return." (Al-Iktifa bima Tadmanuhu min Maghazi Rasul Allah wa al-Thalathah al-Khulafa, Vol. 2, Chapter 1, pp. 324-325, Umar<sup>ra</sup> bin al-Khattab, Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, Beirut, 1420 AH)*

*On the way to Farama, the Muslim army did not encounter a single Byzantine soldier, and in fact, the Egyptians welcomed them in various places, and it was in Farama that the very first confrontation took place.*

*There are various narrations [with reference to Hazrat Amr<sup>ra</sup> bin al-Aas], but the one that seems correct is that letter was received after having reached Arish, which is situated within the border of Egypt. It cannot be that he continued to make excuses in order to only open the letter after reaching Egypt. Nevertheless, since they had already reached Egypt, the only option was to advance forward as the believers do not retreat.*

*The Byzantines received news that Hazrat Amr<sup>ra</sup> bin al-Aas was coming with a small army with insufficient preparation and could not lay a siege for too long. The Byzantines thought that since they were better prepared and in a greater number, therefore they would easily defeat them. The Byzantines secured themselves in their fortress. Hazrat Amr<sup>ra</sup> bin al-Aas had come to know of the military power of the Byzantines and that they were much greater in weapons and in number. He, therefore, made plans to either seize Farama whereby they would launch a surprise attack, have the rampart doors opened, or to then remain patient in their besiegement until the residents ran out of food and come forth out of desperation. Thus, they laid siege [to the city].*

*On the one hand, the Muslims were tightening their siege, and on the other, the Byzantines were stubborn in their persistence. As such, the siege continued for many months. Sometimes the Byzantine forces would emerge for a few skirmishes but would then retreat. The Muslims would always prevail in these skirmishes.*

*One day, some Byzantine forces came forth in combat against the Muslims and the Muslims prevailed over them. When the Byzantines retreated to their fort in defeat, the Muslims swiftly pursued them. Some Muslims beat the Byzantines to the rampart gates and opened them, clearing the path to a clear victory. (Al-Salabi, Sayyiduna Umar bin Khattab<sup>ra</sup> translated [Khangarh, Pakistan: Al-Furqan Trust], pp. 756-757)*

*The conquest of Bilbeis and the circumstances in which it occurred are as follows: After the conquest of Farama, as Hazrat Amr<sup>ra</sup> bin al-Aas was setting*

out for Bilbeis, he was intercepted by Byzantine forces. Bilbeis is a city located approximately 30 miles from Fustat, en route to Syria. The Muslims were intercepted to prevent them from reaching the fort of Babylon. In ancient terminology, the land of Egypt was referred to as Babylon, particularly the region where Fustat was located. The Byzantines intended to fight there. Hazrat Amr<sup>ra</sup> bin al-Aas told them not to be hasty and to hold off until they had heard his proposal so that there would be no excuses or evasions later. Hazrat Amr<sup>ra</sup> bin al-Aas also said for them to send Abu Maryaam as an emissary to represent them. Thus, they deferred the battle and sent the two emissaries. Both these delegates were priests from Bilbeis. Hazrat Amr<sup>ra</sup> bin al-Aas presented them with the options of accepting Islam or paying jizya, and along with this, recounted the words of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> about the people of Egypt. The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said, "You will conquer Egypt, a land where the unit of qir'at is used [to measure]. When you conquer that land, treat its people kindly because they have a right over you and are among your kin." Or he stated, "They have a right over you and you share ancestral fathers."

Upon hearing this, the two emissaries said that this was a very distant relationship that could only be fulfilled by prophets and asked to leave and deliberate on their decision, upon which they would return. Hazrat Amr<sup>ra</sup> bin al-Aas told them that he would not be fooled and that he would give them a period of three days to carefully contemplate on the matter. Both the emissaries asked for an additional day for deliberation, so they were given one additional day. The two of them then returned to Muqawqis, the leader of the Copts, and Artabun [Aretion], the governor of Egypt appointed by the Byzantine Emperor, and presented them with the proposal from the Muslims. Artabun denied the proposal and was bent on war, and he launched an assault on the Muslims overnight. The forces of Artabun are recorded to have been 12,000 in number. A great deal of Muslims was martyred in this conflict, while the Byzantines lost 1,000 soldiers to the battle and another 3,000 were imprisoned. Artabun fled the battlefield, while some say that he was slain in this very battle. The Muslims continued to prevail over Artabun's forces until they reached Alexandria. Historians agree that the Muslims remained in Bilbeis for a month, during which time the battle continued and, ultimately, the Muslims were victorious. Historians, however, debate over whether or not this was an intense battle. (Al-Salabi, Sayyiduna Umar bin Khattab<sup>ra</sup> translated [Khangarh, Pakistan: Al-Furqan Trust], pp. 757-758) (Hazrat Umar Farooq A'zam, Muhammad Husain Haikal, translated by Habib Ash'ar, pp. 564-565, Islami Kutub Khana, Urdu Bazar, Lahore) (Al-Iktifa bima Tadmanuhu min Maghazi Rasul Allah wa al-Thalathah al-Khulafa, Vol. 2, p. 346, Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, Beirut, 1420 AH) (Yaqut Ibn Abd Allah al-Hamawi, Mu'jam al-Buldan, Vol. 1, Bilbeis [Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah], p. 567) (Atlas Futuhat Islamiyyah, Vol. 2, p. 225, Dar al-Salam, Al-Riyad, 1428 AH)

During this battle, an incident took place that is a testament to the sagacity and moral superiority of the Muslims. When Allah the Almighty granted Muslims victory in Bilbeis, the daughter of Muqawqis was imprisoned, whose

name was Armanoosah. She was his favourite and beloved daughter whom he planned to marry off to Constantine, the son of Heraclius. She was not content with this marriage and took an excursion to Bilbeis with her maid. When the Muslims had imprisoned her, Hazrat Amr<sup>ra</sup> bin al-Aas gathered the noble Companions<sup>ra</sup> and recited the following words of Allah the Almighty:

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*"Is the reward of goodness anything but goodness?" (Ch.55: V.61)*

*Then, in reference to this verse, he reminded them by stating, "Muqawqis sent a gift to our Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup>. I am of the opinion that his daughter should be returned to him along with her entourage and servants and all the wealth that was seized."*

*Everyone was in agreement with Hazrat Amr<sup>ra</sup> bin al-Aas. Accordingly, Hazrat Amr<sup>ra</sup> bin al-Aas sent Armanoosah to her father with great honour and dignity; along with all her jewellery and accompanying women and servants. On their journey back, one of Armanoosah's maids remarked that they were protected in every direction by Arabs. Armanoosah replied to her, saying that she felt safe for her life and honour in the tents of the Arabs, but did not consider her life to be safe in her father's fortress. When she reached her father, he was very pleased with how the Muslims had treated her. (Al-Salabi, Sayyiduna Umar bin Khattab<sup>ra</sup> translated [Khangarh, Pakistan: Al-Furqan Trust], pp. 758-759)*

*Then, there is mention of the conquest of Umm Dunayn [Tendunyas]. After the conquest of Bilbeis, Hazrat Amr<sup>ra</sup> bin al-Aas was advancing along the desert's perimeter when he reached a place close to Umm Dunayn, which was located on the Nile River at the source of Trajan's Canal. This canal was close to Suez and joined Egypt City and the Mediterranean Sea, where Azbakeya, a district in Cairo, is located today. Umm Dunayn was located at this very place during that time, which the Byzantines had fortified. In the near vicinity were the riverbanks of the Nile, where many boats were docked. This area was to the north of Babylon, which was the largest fort of Egypt City. In this way, Umm Dunayn could be considered the foremost defensive outpost for guarding this precious region, which the Egyptians cherished as the centre of operations for many past pharaohs. The Muslims set up camp near Umm Dunayn. The Byzantines sent their finest soldiers to their fort in Babylon and heavily reinforced their fort in Umm Dunayn as they prepared for battle. According to information received from the reconnaissance, Hazrat Amr<sup>ra</sup> bin al-Aas estimated that his forces were not enough to conquer Fort Babylon or to besiege it. He sent a messenger with a letter to Medina detailing the circumstances of his journey to Egypt, intelligence on the enemy forts and the need for reinforcements in order to attack them. He also announced to his forces that reinforcements would join them shortly.*

*Following this, he advanced towards Umm Dunayn and laid siege, cutting the fort's supply of food and military equipment. The Byzantines in Fort Babylon didn't even consider coming out because they had witnessed Artabun's outcome*

*in Bilbeis and realised that they could not combat the Arabs on an open battlefield. The forces of Umm Dunayn would periodically emerge for a skirmish but would retreat in failure. Many weeks passed like this. At the same time, news arrived that the first reinforcements from the Khalifa were on their way and would arrive very soon. This news greatly supplemented the strength and resolve of the Muslims. (Hazrat Umar Farooq A'zam, Muhammad Husain Haikal, translated by Habib Ash'ar, pp. 567-570, Islami Kutub Khana, Urdu Bazar, Lahore)*

*Hazrat Umar<sup>ra</sup> had sent 4,000 soldiers as reinforcements for the Muslim forces. He also appointed a leader for every 1,000 soldiers. Those leaders were, Hazrat Zubair<sup>ra</sup> bin al-Awam, Hazrat Miqdad<sup>ra</sup> bin Aswad, Hazrat Ubadah<sup>ra</sup> bin Samit and Hazrat Maslamah<sup>ra</sup> bin Mukhallad.*

*According to one narration, Kharijah bin Huzayfa was made the amir in place of Hazrat Maslamah<sup>ra</sup> bin Mukhallad. Along with sending reinforcements, Hazrat Umar<sup>ra</sup> wrote a letter to Hazrat Amr<sup>ra</sup> bin al-Aas saying, "Now you have 12,000 soldiers with you. They will never be defeated on account of being fewer in number."*

*The Byzantines set out along with the Copts to fight the Muslims. A fierce battle ensued between the two sides. Hazrat Amr<sup>ra</sup> bin al-Aas devised a strategy whereby he divided the army into three parts; one was near Jabal-e-Ahmar, the second was by the Nile River at a place called Umm Dunayn, and the remainder of the army set out to battle the enemy.*

*As the two armies were engaged in fierce battle, the army hiding by Jabal-e-Ahmar came out and attacked from behind, which scattered the ranks of the opposing army and they fled towards Umm Dunayn. There, the second part of the Islamic army was waiting and stopped their path. Thus, the Byzantine army was trapped between the three Muslim armies as a result of which the opponents suffered defeat. (Al-Salabi, Sayyiduna Umar bin Khattab<sup>ra</sup> translated [Khangarh, Pakistan: Al-Furqan Trust], p. 759)*

*It is mentioned regarding various other conquests that after the victory at Umm Dunayn, the first place Hazrat Amr<sup>ra</sup> bin al-Aas conquered was Fayum and the chief of that area was killed in this battle. (Hazrat Umar Farooq A'zam, Muhammad Husain Haikal, translated by Habib Ash'ar, pp. 571-572, Islami Kutub Khana, Urdu Bazar, Lahore)*

*Then, the Muslims faced the Byzantines in Ain al-Shams. Before this, reinforcements of 8,000 soldiers came and met Hazrat Amr<sup>ra</sup> bin al-Aas. Hazrat Zubair<sup>ra</sup> bin al-Awwam was the commander and Hazrat Ubadah<sup>ra</sup> bin Samit, Hazrat Miqdad<sup>ra</sup> bin Aswad and Hazrat Maslamah<sup>ra</sup> bin Mukhallad were also part of this. The Muslims were also victorious in this battle. Later, the Muslims gained victory over the entire area of Fayum. One part of the Muslim army gained victory in two cities of the Manoofiya region; Ithreeb and Manuf. (Hazrat Umar Farooq A'zam, Muhammad Husain Haikal, translated by*

*Habib Ash'ar, pp. 573, 579, Islami Kutub Khana, Urdu Bazar, Lahore) (Atlas Futuhat Islamiyyah, Vol. 2, p. 229, Dar al-Salam, Al-Riyad, 1428 AH)*

*It is recorded regarding the victory over the Babylon Fort or Fustat that after gaining victory at Umm Dunayn, Hazrat Amr<sup>ra</sup> bin al-Aas marched towards the Babylon Fort and laid siege to it. Now this area is known as Fustat. The reason for it being called this is that in Arabic, tents are called "Fustat". After successfully conquering the fort, Hazrat Amr<sup>ra</sup> bin al-Aas commanded to leave, and it so happened that a pigeon made a nest in Hazrat Amr's<sup>ra</sup> tent. When he saw it, he instructed that the tent should remain there and upon returning from Alexandria, he had a city established near the tent; and it subsequently became known as Fustat. (Al-Faruq, Shibli Nomani, pp. 150-151, Dar al-Isha'ah, Karachi, 2004)*

*It is estimated that the protective forces inside the fort were around 5,000 to 6,000 and they were armed in every way. Hazrat Amr<sup>ra</sup> began the siege of the Babylon Fort. After Alexandria, this was one of the strongest forts and had been built with cement blocks. It was surrounded by water from the Nile River. Since it was located on the Nile River, boats and ships would go straight to the door of the fort, and so it was essential for important work. The Arabs were not properly equipped to attack such a fort nor were they ready for this. (Sirat Umar Faruq<sup>ra</sup>, Muhammad Raza, pp. 264-265, Maktabah Islamiyyah, 2010)*

*And so, first and foremost, Hazrat Amr<sup>ra</sup> began making preparations to lay siege. Muqawqis, the ruler of Egypt, had already reached the fort before Hazrat Amr<sup>ra</sup> bin al-Aas and was preparing for battle. Hazrat Zubair<sup>ra</sup> rode his horse around all four sides of the ditch and would appoint the necessary number of soldiers to a given area. This siege continued for seven months straight, and the determination of victory or defeat could not be made. (Al-Faruq, Shibli Nomani, p. 150, Dar al-Isha'ah, Karachi, 2004)*

*During this time, sometimes the Byzantines would come out of the fort to fight but then would go back inside. All the while, Muqawqis would send his envoys to Hazrat Amr<sup>ra</sup> bin al-Aas in attempts to reconcile and strike fear.*

*Hazrat Amr<sup>ra</sup> bin al-Aas sent Hazrat Ubadah<sup>ra</sup> bin Samit for reconciliation with three conditions; either accept Islam or pay jizya, otherwise there would be a war. He said that a treaty should not be reached based on any other condition apart from these. Muqawqis agreed to pay jizya, and went himself to Heraclius to seek permission. However, Heraclius did not accept this and in fact became quite angry and expelled him from the land as a result. (Sayyiduna Umar bin Khattab<sup>ra</sup> – Shakhshiyyat aur karnamey, Ali Muhammad Salabi, Urdu translation, p. 760, Al-Furqan Trust, Khangarh, Pakistan) (Hazrat Umar Farooq A'zam, Muhammad Husain Haikal, translated by Habib Ash'ar, pp. 582, 584, 590, Islami Kutub Khana, Urdu Bazar, Lahore)*

*When victory at the Babylon Fort seemed to be delayed, Hazrat Zubair<sup>ra</sup> bin al-A'awam said, "I am going to present my life as an offering in the way of Allah. I am hopeful that this will allow the Muslims to become victorious."*

*Upon saying this, he took an unsheathed sword, and using a ladder, scaled the wall of the fort. Some other companions supported him as well.*

*Once they had scaled the wall, they raised slogans along with which the entire army raised slogans, causing the floor of the fort to vibrate, as it were. The Christians realised that the Muslims had entered the fort, upon which they aimlessly ran. Upon coming down from the wall, Hazrat Zubair<sup>ra</sup> opened the door to the fort, and the entire army came inside, and after some fighting, they conquered the fort. (Sayyiduna Umar bin Khattab<sup>ra</sup> – Shakhshiyyat aur karname, Ali Muhammad Salabi, Urdu translation, p. 760, Al-Furqan Trust, Khangarh, Pakistan) (Al-Faruq, Shibli Nomani, p. 150, Dar al-Isha'ah, Karachi, 2004)*

*Hazrat Amr<sup>ra</sup> bin al-Aas assured them security on the condition that the Byzantine army would take some provisions with them that will last them a few days, and that they would leave the treasures and armour in the Babylon Fort untouched as they were the spoils of the Muslims. Afterwards, Hazrat Amr<sup>ra</sup> bin al-Aas broke the domes and fortified walls of the fort. (Sayyiduna Umar bin Khattab<sup>ra</sup> – Shakhshiyyat aur karname, Ali Muhammad Salabi, Urdu translation, p. 760, Al-Furqan Trust, Khangarh, Pakistan)*

*After conquering the Babylon Fort, the Muslims gained various victories in different places and forts in Egypt, of which, the most prominent was Tarnut, Naqyus, Sultais, Kiryon. (Hazrat Umar Farooq A'zam, Muhammad Husain Haikal, translated by Habib Ash'ar, p. 602, 603, 605, 608, Islami Kutub Khana, Urdu Bazar, Lahore)*

*As for the conquest of Alexandria, it is stated that after the conquest of Fustat, Hazrat Umar<sup>ra</sup> granted permission for the conquest of Alexandria. There was a large battle with the Byzantines at a place between Alexandria and Fustat called Kiryon, which the Muslims eventually won. After that, the Byzantines did not come forward until Alexandria. Muqawqis wished to pay the jizya and establish peace; however, the Byzantines pressured him, as a result of which Muqawqis sent a message to Hazrat Amr<sup>ra</sup> bin al-Aas saying that he and the Copts would not be taking part in the battle, and so they should be left unharmed. The Copts remained separate from this and instead supported the Muslim army and began clearing paths and fixing bridges for the Muslims. During the siege of Alexandria, the Copts would provide the Muslims with provisions.*

*The significance of Alexandria can be gauged by the fact that when the Muslims conquered Alexandria, the city was considered its capital city. After Constantinople, this was known as the second largest city of Byzantine rule. Furthermore, this was also the world's first trading city. The Byzantines knew very well that if the Muslims were to conquer this city, it would pose dire consequences. It was out of this fear that Heraclius said that if the Arabs overtook Alexandria, the Byzantines would be ruined.*

*Heraclius started preparing to fight the Muslims himself but died during his preparations, and his son Constantine succeeded him as the ruler. Alexandria*

*was unique to its prominent structures, large forts, location and a large number of guards.*

*The siege of Alexandria continued for nine months. Hazrat Umar<sup>ra</sup> was worried and wrote a letter saying, "Perhaps you have become driven by luxuries there otherwise obtaining victory should not have taken this long. Along with this message, deliver a speech to the Muslims about jihad and then level an attack."*

*After reading out this letter from Hazrat Umar<sup>ra</sup>, Hazrat Amr<sup>ra</sup> bin al-Aas called Hazrat Ubadah<sup>ra</sup> bin Samit and handed him the flag. The Muslims carried out an intense attack and thus conquered the city.*

*Hazrat Amr<sup>ra</sup> dispatched a messenger to Medina with instructions for him to ride as fast as he possibly could to convey this good news to the leader of the faithful. The messenger mounted the she-camel and traversed the landscape until finally arriving in Medina. It was afternoon and the messenger, thinking it was resting time, avoided going straight to the Khalifa's residence and instead headed to the Prophet's Mosque [Masjid al-Nabawi]. Coincidentally, a female servant of Hazrat Umar<sup>ra</sup> was passing by and asked the messenger who he was and where he had travelled from.*

*"From Alexandria", replied the messenger. The servant rushed and immediately informed Hazrat Umar<sup>ra</sup> and on returning said, "Come, the Leader of the Faithful calls for you." Hazrat Umar<sup>ra</sup> was already about to head there himself and was arranging his shawl, when the messenger arrived. Hazrat Umar<sup>ra</sup> received news of the victory and fell down into prostration in gratitude to Allah. He then got up and went to the mosque and made an announcement: "Al-Salat-ul-Jami".*

*All of Medina heeded this call and arrived. The messenger informed all of the details of the victory. Thereafter, the messenger went with Hazrat Umar<sup>ra</sup> to his residence and the messenger was presented with a meal. Hazrat Umar<sup>ra</sup> enquired from the messenger, "Why did you not come directly to me?" The messenger explained, "I thought you would be resting at the time." Hazrat Umar<sup>ra</sup> said, "How did you misconceive this about me? If I rest during the day then who would bear the responsibility of the station of Khilafat?"*

*With the conquest of Alexandria, all of Egypt was conquered. Through these battles a large number of prisoners of war were captured. Hazrat Umar<sup>ra</sup> gave the following directives in a letter to Hazrat Amr<sup>ra</sup> regarding these prisoners: "Summon all of them and tell them they may choose to become Muslim should they wish to, or they may choose to remain upon their existing religion. If they accept Islam, they will be granted all those rights the Muslims have been afforded. Otherwise, they will have to give the jizya, which is given by all non-Muslim subjects."*

*When this announcement was read before the prisoners, many chose to become Muslim, whilst many others chose to remain on their existing faith. Whenever anyone amongst them decided to embrace Islam, the other Muslims would all raise slogans of "Allah is the Greatest." Whenever anyone amongst the*



*prisoners professed to continue their belief in Christianity, the other Christians would sing tributes of praise, leaving the Muslims feeling sorrowful. (Al-Faruq, Shibli Nomani, pp. 162-165, Dar al-Isha'ah, Karachi, 1991) (Al-Salabi, Sayyiduna Umar bin Khattab<sup>ra</sup> translated [Khangarh, Pakistan: Al-Furqan Trust], pp. 760-764)*

...

*Then, there is the conquest of Barqa [Cyrenaica]] and Tripoli. After conquering Egypt and establishing law and order there, Amr<sup>ra</sup> bin al-Aas headed west so that the conquered lands would be safe from threat from that side. There were some Byzantine forces based in Barqa and Tripoli and were seizing an opportunity so that they could incite the people and subsequently attack the Muslims in Egypt. The area between Alexandria and Morocco was known as Barqa. Many towns and settlements existed in this region.*

*Thus, in 22 AH, Amr<sup>ra</sup> bin al-Aas marched with his army towards Barqa. The land from Alexandria to Barqa was very lush and fertile and was densely populated. For this reason, until they reached there, they did not face any schemes of the enemy. When they reached there, the people agreed to a treaty on the condition of paying the jizya. Subsequently, the people of Barqa would themselves go to the governor of Egypt and pay the Kharaj and the Muslims would not need to go to collect it themselves. Among the people in this region, they were the most simple. They did not instigate any discord or rebellion. Amr<sup>ra</sup> bin al-Aas left here and headed towards Tripoli, which was a city protected by forts. A large Byzantine army was stationed there.*

*When they learnt of the approaching Muslim army, they retreated to the forts and were forced to put up with the siege by the Muslims. This siege lasted for one month, but the Muslims did not attain much success. From the rear, the sea was connected to Tripoli and there was no wall between the sea and the city. The Muslims became aware of this secret and a few Muslims entered the city via the sea. They loudly raised the slogans of "Allah is the Greatest". The opposing army was left with no other option but to take shelter in their boats. When they ran, Amr<sup>ra</sup> bin al-Aas launched an attack and killed most of them, except the ones that had escaped on their boats. The equipment and wealth in the city were captured by the Muslims as spoils of the battle. After this, Amr<sup>ra</sup> bin al-Aas spread his army in the surrounding areas.*

*His intention was that after attaining victories in the direction towards the West to then head towards Tunisia and Africa. And so, he wrote a letter to Hazrat Umar<sup>ra</sup>; however, Hazrat Umar<sup>ra</sup>, at the time, was reluctant to send the Muslim army to any new battlefield, particularly at a time when he was not convinced [of complete peace and security] in the lands which had been conquered from Syria to Tripoli in such a short space of time. And so, he instructed the army to remain stationed in Tripoli.*